Comparison of the Adrenal and Renal Responses to Angiotensin II in Fetal Lambs and Adult Sheep

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SUMMARY The adrenal and renal responses to similar increases in plasma angiotensin II (AII) were studied in chronically catheterized fetal lambs (112-131 days gestation; term 145 days) and adult nonpregnant sheep. The rate of AII infusion was adjusted to compare the effect of similar rises in plasma AII concentration between fetuses and adult ewes. Increases in plasma AII were associated with a decrease in plasma renin activity (PRA) in both fetuses (5.55 ± 1.53 to 2.11 ± 0.59 ng/ml per hr, P < 0.05) and adult ewes (1.28 ± 0.34 to 0.62 ± 0.16 ng/ml per hr, P < 0.05), but the percent changes in PRA for similar increases in plasma AII were not different when fetuses were compared to adult ewes. Contrary to the effect of AII on PRA, the increase in plasma AII did not produce parallel changes in plasma aldosterone concentration when fetuses were compared to adult ewes. The percent changes in plasma aldosterone concentration for similar increases in AII concentration were significantly higher in adult ewes (+165 ± 37%) than in fetuses (+58 ± 15%) (P < 0.01). Finally, there were no significant changes in fetal urinary excretion of PGE and PGF2α when a significant rise (P < 0.05) was observed in adult ewes at the highest level of plasma AII concentration. In summary, the present results tend to suggest that there are differences between fetuses and adult ewes in the response to AII, the response being smaller in fetuses.

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THE ACTIVITY of the renin-angiotensin system has been found to be elevated during fetal life and in newborns when values are compared to adult levels (Mott, 1975). Factors controlling the activity of the renin-angiotensin system have also been investigated. It has been demonstrated that fetal plasma renin activity (PRA) and plasma angiotensin II (AII) levels increase after stimulation by furosemide (Siegel and Fisher, 1980), blood volume reduction (Robillard et al., 1979), fetal hypotension (Lumbers and Lewes, 1979), hypoxemia (Robillard et al., 1981), and aortic constriction (Smith et al., 1974). Conversely, inhibition of prostaglandin synthesis by indomethacin (Matson et al., in press), infusion of exogenous arginine vasopressin (Robillard and Weitzman, 1980a) and fetal hypertension during infusion of phenylephrine (Lumbers and Lewes, 1979) are associated with significant decreases in fetal PRA. However, previous attempts to study factors regulating aldosterone secretion during fetal life suggested that fetal aldosterone secretion “in vivo” is not controlled by ACTH (Brown et al., 1978), AII (Siegel and Fisher, 1980), nor variations in plasma potassium concentration (Wintour et al., 1979), despite the fact that, in vitro, the fetal adrenal gland has the ability to synthesize and secrete aldosterone (Pasqualini et al., 1966; Dufau and Villee, 1969; Wintour et al., 1977). On the other hand, we recently demonstrated a close correlation between fetal PRA and plasma aldosterone concentration, suggesting that aldosterone secretion is under the influence of the renin-angiotensin system during fetal life (Robillard et al., 1980b).

The present protocol was designed to study the role of AII in modulating aldosterone secretion and plasma renin activity during fetal life and to determine whether there are differences between fetal and adult responses to AII. Since the volume of distribution and plasma clearance rate of AII are unknown during fetal life and might be different than in adults, we compared the effects of similar plasma AII concentrations rather than comparing similar rates of infusion. Moreover, we determined the effects of similar increases in plasma AII concentration on renal blood flow, glomerular filtration rate, and excretion of water and electrolytes in fetal lambs and adult ewes. Finally, the effect of AII on urinary excretion of prostaglandins were compared between fetal lambs and adult ewes.
Methods

Animal Preparation and Surgical Procedures

Pregnant sheep of Dorset and Suffolk mixed breeding were obtained from a local source, and the gestational age was based on the induced ovulation technique, as previously described (Jennings and Crowley, 1972).

Anesthesia of the ewe and surgery of the fetus were performed as described previously (Robillard and Weitzman, 1980a), 6 days before doing any experiments. Before the start of each experiment, fetal weight was estimated according to the following formula: fetal body weight (kg) = [0.096 × gestational age (days)] - 9.223, (r = 0.85, P < 0.001) (Robillard and Weitzman, 1980a).

Adult nonpregnant ewes were also studied. Surgery was performed at least 6 days before experiments using the same procedures described for the fetus. A bladder catheter was introduced via the urethra the day of the experiment.

Physiological studies

During the physiological studies, each ewe was transferred into a small cart permitting it to stand only. Synthetic AII (Beckman Instruments) was infused in 17 chronically catheterized fetal lambs between 112 and 131 days of gestation (term being 145 days) and in nine adult nonpregnant ewes. Prior to the infusion of AII, a control infusion of 5% dextrose was administered intravenously for a period of 90 minutes in both fetuses and adult nonpregnant ewes at respective rates of 0.09 ml/min and 0.2 ml/min. After the control infusion period, AII was infused at three different incremental rates, each one lasting 60 minutes, before any blood samples were taken; preliminary studies have demonstrated that an equilibration period of 45 minutes is sufficient to reach a steady plateau of plasma AII in the fetus and adult nonpregnant ewe. In fetuses, AII was infused at 25.8 ± 0.8, 47.6 ± 1.8, and 96.5 ± 4.1 ng/kg/min per kg of body weight and in adult nonpregnant ewes at 5, 10, and 20 ng/kg/min per kg of body weight. A bolus of AII (20 ng/kg) was administered to either the fetus or adult nonpregnant ewes prior to the start of the continuous infusion; this dose was repeated before going to the second rate of infusion, and a double dose (40 ng/kg) was given before starting the third and last rate of AII infusion.

In 15 fetuses and 7 adult nonpregnant ewes, glomerular filtration rate (GFR) was determined by a constant infusion of [125I]-sodium iodothalamate (Glofil, Abbot Laboratories) into the femoral vein prior to and during AII infusion. A priming dose of 0.45 μCi/kg of iodothalamate was administered, followed by a constant infusion of 0.1 μCi/kg per min in 5% dextrose solution. An equilibration time of 75 minutes was observed before the start of the first renal clearance. GFR was determined over a 15-minute period before the start of AII infusion and just prior to the completion of each of the three incremental AII periods. Urine was also collected for determination of urinary electrolytes (Na+, K+, Cl−) and prostaglandins (PGE and PGF2α) excretion rate, and urine osmolality.

Renal blood flow in fetuses and adult ewes was determined at the end of the control period and at the end of each of the three incremental AII periods by infusing approximately 2.0 × 106 radioactive microspheres (15 ± 3 μm) labeled with either 141Ce, 85Sr, 46Sc, or 95Nb, as previously described (Heymann et al., 1977; Robillard and Weitzman, 1980a). Blood for lower body independent reference sample was collected from the femoral artery during a period of 3 minutes beginning 20 seconds before the injection of microspheres and at a withdrawal rate of 2.91 ml/min in fetuses and 4.81 ml/min in adult nonpregnant ewes using a Harvard infusion-withdrawal pump.

Arterial blood samples for determinations of arterial blood gases (Pco2 and Po2), pH, plasma AII, aldosterone, renin activity, and electrolytes (Na+, K+, Cl−) concentrations and for hematocrit, total plasma proteins, plasma osmolality, and plasma [125I]-sodium iodothalamate were drawn during the control infusion period and just prior to the completion of each of the three incremental AII periods. Fetal blood was replaced with an equal amount of maternal blood after each sample was obtained to avoid any hemodynamic effects of sampling. In adult nonpregnant sheep, blood withdrawn for analysis was replaced with an equal amount of blood obtained from the same animal 24 to 36 hours prior to the experiment.

During each experiment, arterial blood pressure and fetal amniotic pressure were recorded continuously with Statham P23Db pressure transducers (Statham Instruments Div., Gould Inc.) and a Beckman R-611 recorder. Fetal mean arterial blood pressures (MABP) were corrected relative to concomitant amniotic pressures. Heart rate was monitored with a cardiotachometer triggered from the arterial pressure pulse wave.

Analytical Methods

Blood for pH, Pco2, and Po2, was collected anaerobically in heparinized glass syringes, and measurements were immediately determined with the appropriate pH, Pco2, and Po2 electrodes at 39°C using a Radiometer PHM 72 MK2 acid-base analyzer (Radiometer Co.). Plasma electrolytes (Na+, K+, Cl−), plasma osmolality, plasma protein content, and concentrations of [125I]-sodium iodothalamate in plasma and urine were determined as previously described (Robillard et al., 1981).

All blood samples for plasma aldosterone and PRA measurements were collected, respectively, in heparinized syringes and in chilled tubes containing EDTA, kept on ice, and centrifuged within a few
minutes at 4°C. PRA and plasma aldosterone concentrations were determined by radioimmunoassays as described previously (Haber et al., 1969; Ito et al., 1972; Robillard et al., 1980b).

Blood samples for plasma AII determinations were collected in chilled tubes containing 0.3 M EDTA and 0.025 M O-phenanthroline. Thereafter, the cells and proteins were immediately precipitated with acetone 65% and the supernatant dried under air for subsequent chromatographic isolation of AII on SP Sephadex in sodium acetate buffer. AII then was measured by radioimmunoassay by the method previously described by Catt et al. (1974) and Cain et al. (1972). Cross-reactivity of the AII antiserum based on AII as 100% reactive is 131% for angiotensin III and less than 3% for angiotensin I. In this assay the minimal dose detectable averaged 2.89 ± 1.54 pg while the ED50 was 55.8 ± 7.6 pg (mean ± sd). The intra-assay coefficient of variation averaged 5.7% and the interassay variation, 8.8%. The recovery of unlabeled AII (100–1000 pg) added to plasma was shown to be uniform (r = 0.989) over the range tested. Recoveries determined by addition of known amounts of unlabeled AII agreed well with recoveries determined by traced method (49.1% vs. 51.3%).

Urine samples for prostaglandins determination were collected under ice, then immediately frozen at −70°C. Urine samples were extracted with ethylacetate and separated into classes by silicic acid chromatography. The urinary PGE and PGF2α levels were determined by radioimmunoassay, using specific antisera. The technique, reliability, and full characterization of each assay have been reported previously (VanOrden et al., 1973, 1977). Cross-reactivity of the AII antiserum was determined according to the following formula: RBF (ml/min) = total kidney counts × reference flow from the femoral artery (ml/min)/total femoral blood counts; RVR (mm Hg/ml per min) = RPF/RBF where RPF is the renal perfusion pressure estimated to be equal to the aortic pressure minus the inferior vena cava pressure; FF (%) = GFR/RPF where GFR is the glomerular filtration rate (ml/min) and RPF is the renal plasma flow (ml/min), RPF being equal to RBF x (1-hematocrit).

In our statistical analysis, Student's paired t-test was used to compare data obtained before and during AII infusion in the same animal, whereas the differences between fetal lambs and adult nonpregnant ewes were analyzed by a nonpaired t-test. The term "significant" is used throughout the paper to describe changes with a total P value of less than 0.05 in a two-sided significance limit. When multiple comparisons were done on the same group of data, the critical value of t was corrected using the Bonferroni method (Wallenstein et al., 1980). The results are presented as mean ± se.

**Results**

Plasma AII concentrations before and at three different rates of infusion of AII are presented in Figure 1. It is demonstrated that, to achieve similar plasma AII concentrations in fetal lambs and adult nonpregnant ewes (referred to as adult ewes in the text), the rate of AII infusion had to be five times higher in fetuses. It was also found that AII infusion in fetuses did not alter maternal AII concentrations: plasma AII levels increased from 58 ± 9 to 401 ± 14 pg/ml in fetuses, while it remained between 53 ± 5 and 43 ± 3 pg/ml in the pregnant ewes. The plasma clearance rate of exogenous AII (PCR AII) did not vary significantly during different rates of AII infusion in either fetal lambs or adult ewes. However, PCRAII values were always higher in fetuses than in adult ewes at each level of AII infusion; the mean values being, respectively, 170 ± 23 ml/min per kg

**Computations and Data Analysis**

The plasma clearance rate of AII (PCR AII) was calculated as previously described (Robillard and Weitzman, 1980a): PCR AII (ml/min) = 0.491 × AIIIR/PAII, where AIIIR is the AII infusion rate, and PAII, and PAII, are plasma AII concentrations during control collection (i) and at equilibrium (f) during AII infusion, corrected for a mean extraction efficiency of 49.1%.

Renal blood flow (RBF), renal vascular resistance (RVR), and filtration fraction (FF) were determined according to the following formula: RBF (ml/min) = total kidney counts × reference flow from the femoral artery (ml/min)/total femoral blood counts; RVR (mm Hg/ml per min) = RPF/RBF where RPF is the renal perfusion pressure estimated to be equal to the aortic pressure minus the inferior vena cava pressure; FF (%) = GFR/RPF where GFR is the glomerular filtration rate (ml/min) and RPF is the renal plasma flow (ml/min), RPF being equal to RBF x (1-hematocrit).

**Figure 1** Effect of AII infusion on plasma AII concentration in fetal lambs (n = 17) and adult nonpregnant ewes (n = 9). Values are mean ± SEM.
TABLE 1  Control Blood Values for Fetal Lambs and Adult Nonpregnant Ewes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Fetus</th>
<th>Adult ewe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(n= 17)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(n= 9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pH</td>
<td>7.37 ± 0.01</td>
<td>7.46 ± 0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PaCO₂ (mmHg)</td>
<td>44 ± 1</td>
<td>34 ± 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PaO₂ (mmHg)</td>
<td>24 ± 1</td>
<td>101 ± 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Na⁺ (mEq/liter)</td>
<td>144 ± 1</td>
<td>143 ± 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K⁺ (mEq/liter)</td>
<td>4.2 ± 0.2</td>
<td>4.1 ± 0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cl⁻ (mEq/liter)</td>
<td>104 ± 1</td>
<td>108 ± 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Osmolality</td>
<td>290 ± 2</td>
<td>287 ± 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hematocrit (%)</td>
<td>31 ± 1</td>
<td>25 ± 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total proteins (g/100 ml)</td>
<td>3.8 ± 1</td>
<td>6.6 ± 0.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Values are mean ± SEM.

in fetuses and 37 ± 3 ml/min per kg in adult ewes (P < 0.01).

There were no significant changes in arterial blood gases (PaCO₂ and PaO₂), pH, plasma concentrations of electrolytes (Na⁺, K⁺, Cl⁻), plasma osmolality, hematocrit, and plasma total protein concentrations when control values in both fetal lambs and adult ewes (Table 1) were compared to values obtained during different rate of AII infusion.

Effect of Angiotensin II Infusion on Plasma Renin Activity (PRA) and Plasma Aldosterone Concentration

The increase in plasma AII concentration was associated with a significant decrease in PRA in both fetuses and adult ewes (Fig. 2): PRA decreased from 5.55 ± 1.53 to 2.11 ± 0.59 ng/ml per hr (P < 0.05) in fetuses and from 1.28 ± 0.34 to 0.62 ± 0.16 ng/ml per hr (P < 0.05) in adult ewes. However, there was no significant difference in the percent changes in PRA for similar increases in plasma AII concentrations when fetuses were compared to adult ewes (Fig. 2). At the highest level (level III) of plasma AII concentration, PRA was decreased by 50.8 ± 8.1% in fetuses and 47.2 ± 6.8% in adult ewes (P < 0.1).

Contrary to the effect of AII on PRA, the increase in plasma AII concentration did not produce parallel changes in plasma aldosterone concentration when fetuses were compared to adult ewes (Fig. 3). The rise in plasma aldosterone following a similar steplike increase in plasma AII concentration was observed earlier in adult ewes than in fetuses; plasma aldosterone increased from 63 ± 17 to 133 ± 49 pg/ml in adult ewes, while no changes were seen in fetuses following the first increase in plasma AII concentration (level I) (Fig. 3). Moreover, the percent changes from baseline to peak (level III) for plasma aldosterone were significantly higher in adult ewes (+165 ± 37%) than in fetuses (+58 ± 15%) (P < 0.01).

Effect of Angiotensin II Infusion on Fetal Renal Function, Urinary Excretion of Prostaglandins (PGE and PGF₂α) and Renal Hemodynamics

There were no significant changes in urinary flow rate and glomerular filtration rate during infusion of AII in either fetuses or adult ewes (Table 2). Significant rises in urine osmolality and urinary Na⁺ and Cl⁻ excretion were observed at the highest level of plasma AII concentration (level III) in both fetuses and adult ewes. No significant changes were seen in urinary potassium excretion rate.

The effect of an increase in plasma AII concentration on urinary prostaglandins excretion is presented in Table 2. No significant changes were found in fetuses, but significant rises in urinary PGE and PGF₂α were observed in adult ewes after reaching the highest level of plasma AII concentration (level III).

The effect of AII on renal hemodynamics was studied in six fetuses and three adult nonpregnant...
TABLE 2 The Effect of All on Renal Function in Fetal Lambs and Adult Ewes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>plasma all concentration</th>
<th>fetal lamb</th>
<th>adult ewe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>control</td>
<td>level i</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v (ml/min)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.59 ± 0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cloth (ml/min)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2.12 ± 0.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u$_{kid}$ v (ng/min)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23.85 ± 4.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u$_{kid}$ v (ng/min)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16.89 ± 2.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>uosm (mOsm/kg H$_2$O)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>136 ± 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u$_{uo}$ V (ng/min)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.82 ± 0.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>u$_{cr}$ V (ng/min)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.88 ± 0.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* For P < 0.05 when values during all infusion are compared to control values. Values for plasma all concentration for control and levels I, II, and III as presented in Table I. V, urinary flow rate; cloth, clearance of $^{125}$I sodium iothalamate; uosm, urine osmolality; uV, urinary excretion rate. n = number of animals. Values are mean ± SEM.

Discussion

The results of the present study demonstrate that All: (1) produces a similar decrease in fetal renal blood flow (RBF) from 39.5 ± 6.0 to 18.4 ± 2.4 ml/min (P < 0.01), and significant increases in renal vascular resistance (RVR) from 1.20 ± 0.19 to 3.42 ± 0.77 mmHg/ml per min (P < 0.05) and filtration fraction (FF) from 0.57 ± 0.7 to 11.5 ± 0.7% (P < 0.01). Similarly, RBF decreased from 590 ± 82 to 443 ± 82 ml/min, and RVR and FF increased respectively from 0.12 ± 0.02 to 0.22 ± 0.04 mmHg/ml per min and from 12.9 ± 1.3 to 21.2 ± 2.1% in all adult ewes following increase in plasma all concentration (level III). These hemodynamic changes were observed in all three adult ewes, but because of the small number of animals studied, these differences did not reach statistical significance.

Mean arterial blood pressure (MAPB) increased significantly (P < 0.05) in both fetuses (from 44 ± 1.1 to 47 ± 1.3 mm Hg) and adult ewes (from 79 ± 2 to 88 ± 2 mm Hg) immediately after the first rise (level I) in plasma all concentration. Associated with the increase in fetal MABP, a significant increase in fetal heart rate from 175 ± 3 to 191 ± 5 beats/min (P < 0.05) was observed, whereas, in adult ewes, the rise in MABP was associated with a modest but nonsignificant decline in heart rate from 89 ± 6 to 86 ± 5 beats/min.

Influence of Increase in Plasma All Concentration on Fetal PRA and Plasma Aldosterone Concentration

It is demonstrated in the present study that the sensitivity of the fetal kidney to elicit a decrease in renin secretion following a rise in plasma all concentration is similar to that of adult ewes. A previous study by Iwamoto and Rudolph (1981) also suggests that All inhibits renin secretion in fetal lambs between 100 and 158 days gestation.

Factors responsible for the decrease in fetal PRA following a rise in plasma all concentration have not been investigated. However, it is unlikely that an increase in plasma aldosterone concentration directly affects renin secretion. In previous studies of adult animals (Geelhoed and Vander, 1967), the investigators have been unable to identify a direct action of aldosterone on renin secretion unless the rise in circulating mineralocorticoids was associated with an increase in total body sodium (Robb et al., 1969), which is unlikely in the present study. More likely, the decline in fetal PRA observed in the present study may be secondary either to a direct action of All on the juxtaglomerular cells, as previously suggested in adult animals (Shade et al., 1973; McDonald et al., 1975), or to an increase in fetal renal perfusion pressure, or both. In the present study, the decline in fetal PRA following the first increase in plasma all concentration (level I) is associated with an 8 ± 1% rise in fetal arterial blood pressure.

The present study also demonstrates that All can stimulate aldosterone secretion during the last trimester of gestation in fetal lambs. Previous in vitro studies have shown in humans (Pasqualini et al., 1966; Dufau and Villee, 1969) and sheep (Wintour et al., 1977) that the fetal adrenal gland is able to synthetize and secrete aldosterone very early in gestation. However, previous attempts to study factors regulating aldosterone secretion during fetal
life suggested that the renin-angiotensin system does not have a predominant role, if any, in controlling aldosterone secretion (Alexander et al., 1968; Siegel and Fisher, 1980). Moreover, it also was demonstrated that an increase in plasma potassium concentration (Wintour et al., 1979) and ACTH infusion (Brown et al., 1978) cannot induce a significant rise in fetal plasma aldosterone concentration.

The reasons for the differences between the previous studies (Alexander et al., 1968; Siegel and Fisher, 1980) and the present results are difficult to explain. Since plasma All concentrations were not determined in any of the previous studies (Alexander et al., 1968; Siegel and Fisher, 1980), one may speculate that the rise in plasma All following stimulation of the renin-angiotensin system was not important enough to produce a significant increase in plasma aldosterone concentration. Moreover, it is also possible that the time period allowed for stimulation of the fetal adrenal gland following a rise in plasma All concentration (Siegel and Fisher, 1980) might have been too short to permit observation of any significant changes in plasma aldosterone. Finally, the increase in fetal plasma aldosterone concentration, seen in the present study, cannot be explained by placental transfer from mother to fetus, since there was no evidence of an increase in maternal plasma All concentration during All infusion.

However, despite the fact that the fetal adrenal gland has the ability to secrete aldosterone in response to All, the percent changes in plasma aldosterone concentration were smaller in fetuses than in adult ewes following similar rises in plasma All concentration. These results suggest that the fetal adrenal gland is not fully sensitive to All. Factors explaining this low adrenal sensitivity to All during fetal life, compared to that of adult sheep or newborn lambs (Siegel, 1981), have not yet been investigated. Previous studies in adults (McCaa et al., 1973; Sealey et al., 1978) suggested that basal plasma All levels may determine the ability of the adrenal to secrete aldosterone following All stimulation. However, there is no evidence that the lowest aldosterone-stimulating effect of All in the fetus compared to adult animals is secondary to low endogenous levels of All, the basal level for plasma All concentration being similar in both fetuses and adult ewes. One also may speculate that the enzymatic potential for aldosterone biosynthesis and the number of cellular receptor sites and receptor binding affinity for All are low during fetal life and might increase during the process of maturation, as suggested previously for the fetal adrenal receptors for ACTH (Durand, 1979). Finally, it is also possible, as suggested in adult (Catt et al., 1979), that the state of sodium homeostasis, which is different in the fetus than in the newborn or adult animal (Ziegler and Fomon, 1974), may also have a role to play in the adrenal sensitivity to All during fetal life.

Effect of Angiotensin II on Fetal Renal Function, Renal Prostaglandins Excretion, and Renal Hemodynamics

Previous studies in adult animals have shown that both intravenous and intraarterial infusion of All may produce moderate to marked decreases in renal blood flow and lesser decreases or no changes in GFR (Navar and Langford, 1974; Levens et al., 1981). Moreover, it has been demonstrated that the effects of All infusion on urinary flow rate and sodium excretion are dose-dependent: both an antidiuretic and antinatriuretic effect and a diuretic and natriuretic effect have been reported during low and high rate infusion of All, respectively (Levens et al., 1981).

In the present study, the effects of an increase in plasma All concentration on renal hemodynamics, GFR, and urinary sodium excretion are similar in both fetuses and adult ewes. Also, since the reduction in RBF is associated, in both groups of animals, with an increase in filtration fraction without changes in GFR, one may suggest that All acts primarily by increasing the efferent arterial tone, and that this mechanism is functional even before birth. Finally, the increase in sodium and chloride excretion at the highest level of plasma All concentration (level III) probably is a reflection of an increase in blood pressure and represents pressure natriuresis.

The absence of a rise in fetal urinary prostaglandin excretion following an increase in plasma All concentration differs from what was found in adult nonpregnant ewes and from previous results in adult dogs (Dunn et al., 1981). The absence of changes in fetal urinary prostaglandins following a rise in plasma All concentration is probably not secondary to a defect in the ability of the fetal lamb kidney to synthetize prostaglandin. Pace-Asciak (1977) in fetal lambs and Terragno and coworkers (1978) in fetal pigs demonstrated that the biosynthetic capacity of the fetal kidney for prostaglandins (PGF2α, PGE2, and PGI2) is mature during the last trimester of gestation. It is possible that the absence of an increase in fetal urinary prostaglandin excretion may be secondary to a smaller amount of All perfusing the fetal kidney when compared to adult. Since the renal blood flow is significantly (P < 0.005) lower in fetuses (1.92 ± 0.13 ml/min per g of kidney) than in adult ewes (4.20 ± 0.73 ml/min per g of kidney), the absolute amount of All perfusing the fetal kidney will be less than in adults for similar plasma All concentrations. Finally, one may speculate that the binding of All to receptor in renal medullary interstitial cells (Brown et al., 1980) is decreased during fetal life, compared to adults, but this hypothesis still needs to be tested.

In summary, the present data support the idea...
that All is an important modulator of plasma renin activity, plasma aldosterone concentration, and blood pressure during fetal life. However, the adrenal and vasopressor responses to a rise in plasma All concentration were less in fetuses than in adult ewes. Furthermore, the data demonstrate that All does not induce a rise in fetal urinary prostaglandins excretion at plasma levels known to increase renal prostaglandins production in adult ewes. Finally, the present results suggest that All may modulate fetal GFR by controlling the efferent arteriolar tone, as previously suggested for adult animals (Hall et al., 1977).

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